

not been used in any meaningful way since Boulenger's (1916) review in which he incorrectly listed *C. weeksii* (without comment) in his synonymy of *C. maculatum* Thominot, 1886.

(3) With regard to point (5) of the comment: *C. oxyrhynchum/weeksii* is not an uncommon species either in the wild or in museum collections. While it has been the focus of little published work, it is widely listed as *C. oxyrhynchum* in faunal lists and surveys.

(4) Given the early misuse of the name *C. weeksii*, the later incorrect synonymization and the great length of time the name has been out of use, I feel rejection of *C. weeksii* is warranted.

Comment on the suggested introduction of 'Protected Works'

(see BZN 44: 79–85; 45: 45–46, 47)

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I should like to endorse the ideas and sentiments so lucidly expounded by Cornelius (BZN 44: 79–85). It seems to me that the Code, in its strictest application, has become largely self-defeating in its presumed aim of producing nomenclatural stability. Far too many names that have for long been established in the minds and literature of scientists and naturalists are being assassinated in the name of priority, a practice condoned (perhaps even encouraged) by the present rules.

Cornelius's suggestion (p. 82) of Protected Works is a sensible, worthwhile idea but does not, to my mind, go far enough; it also suffers from one practical drawback — accessibility. The sort of publications suggested as Protected Works are not always readily available, especially to freelance or non-professional scientists and naturalists (who have always held a position of importance in the field of taxonomy), and obtaining copies through various library and copying services can become downright expensive. This notwithstanding, Protected Works must surely offer a sane pathway to stability.

As a possible solution to the problem of accessibility I would like to propose an extension to the concept: an Official Register of Protected Names, derived from Protected Works. Such a Register *need not be published* in the conventional manner, but merely be stored in a computer at some convenient place, such as a national museum; a duplicate Register could be maintained in any country. Copies of pages or sections could be printed out on demand to anyone on payment of a minimal cover charge. Parallel usage of Protected Names in *Zoological Record* would enhance the system. Perhaps international 'group conferences' (such as, in my own field, the International Cnidarian Conference, 1989) could be persuaded to stage a nomenclatural discussion session in order to suggest/adopt Protected Works and haggle over those contentious name changes which crop up in any major group.

I also support the idea (BZN 44: 83; 45: 46) of effectively reversing the current procedure when applying to the Commission in order to conserve names — surely a

discouragement to conservation. If potential nomenclatural pedants who have disinterred some archaic, unnecessary senior synonym had to justify its resurrection through the rigmarole of publishing a proposal in the BZN, then having to wait some time for comments and, finally, a decision from the Commission, they might be more inclined to leave well enough alone. It seems to me that any ancient synonym (say prior to this century) which has not by now been resurrected is unlikely to be of any consequence.

Surely it is time to call a halt to the runaway use of nomenclature for-its-own-sake, and to recognise and administer it for what it should be: a simple and reliable tool for those who wish to describe a species in little more than two words.

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The proposal by Cornelius is, in my opinion, a recipe for taxonomic chaos. It seeks to reintroduce a major element of subjectivity into zoological nomenclature.

There exists in the libraries of the world a finite number of old publications containing items relevant to the names of animals. Given the finite nature of this database the Principle of Priority will, in due course, be brought to bear on all these publications and a stable nomenclature will be arrived at. This process will take decades, probably centuries, but it is a realistic end point. Interference with this process, by the designation of 'Protected Works', will merely delay the attainment of the ultimate goal and be a great disservice to future generations of zoologists.

Comments on the proposed suppression for nomenclature of three works by R. W. Wells and C. R. Wellington

(Case 2531: see BZN 44: 116–121; 257–261 and 45: 52–54).

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I strongly support the proposal to suppress, for nomenclatural purposes, three works by R. W. Wells and C. R. Wellington. My own recent area of study has concerned the scincid lizards and the inadequacy of the Wells & Wellington approach (well stated in the application by the Australian Society of Herpetologists) is very obvious in this group.

One justification which has been presented to me as a reason to oppose suppression is that such an action would contravene principles of free speech. I disagree. The application does not oppose the right of Wells and Wellington to say or publish what they want. Rather, it sets out to relieve the rest of the herpetological community from the obligation of having to use the names in these publications. In this sense I feel that failure to suppress the works will infringe the freedom of expression of the rest of the scientific community.